

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

Basham Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7800 • Fax: 517-373-9310
E-mail: senrbasham@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD08



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: State Sen. Ray Basham

PHONE: 517/373-7800

SEN. BASHAM INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO FIGHT TEEN SMOKING

Bill Would Increase Penalties for Businesses That Sell Tobacco Products to Minors

(Lansing) State Sen. Ray Basham introduced legislation today which would toughen penalties for businesses which sell tobacco products to underage minors. Basham knows that most gas stations and convenience stores do the right thing and check ID's but there are still those who don't follow the law. The Taylor Democrat said current penalties do not provide a sufficient deterrent to some cigarette retailers and young people who do not choose to follow the law.

"Studies show that states that aggressively enforce bans on teen smoking have significant decreases in regular smoking among adolescents," said Sen. Basham. "This is a serious public health matter and we owe it to our children to revisit how effective the laws have been."

Currently, businesses caught selling tobacco products to minors are fined only \$50, no matter how many times they are caught. Sen. Basham's legislation would increase the initial fine from \$50 to \$100 and raise penalties for a second and third offense within the same

calendar year. For a second offense penalties would be set at \$250. A third offense would result in a fine of \$500.

“People are often surprised to learn that it’s only a \$50 fine to sell cigarettes to minors, stores can pay for a \$50 fine by selling ten packs of cigarettes,” said Sen. Basham. “My concern is that some unscrupulous businessmen might consider \$50 a small price to pay for the increased business.”
